

APPLIED ANTHROPOLOGY IN LATIN AMERICA

Charles P. Loomis: Associate Editor

Editor's Note: Beginning with this issue, Dr. Charles P. Loomis of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, will become Associate Editor in charge of a section dealing with work in applied anthropology in Latin America. His primary purpose is to maintain a clearing-house for those interested in this field, and to report and to review current activities. He has requested that readers who know of work which they feel should be discussed in this section will get in touch with him so that it can be made available to others. Readers may be interested to know that as we go to press Dr. Loomis is working on a study of the Tingo Maria Colonization and Experiment Project in Peru, where his task is that of assisting the Peruvian colonization administration and the American technicians in getting colonists to grow rubber, cinchona and other vital products. This work will be reported in Applied Anthropology in a future issue.

RURAL SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES

The decision of the State Department to employ three outstanding rural sociologists to make sociological and anthropological studies in three leading Latin American countries, Argentina, Brazil and Mexico was based in no small measure upon the reputation of the rural sociologists in the applied field. A year ago last February Professor T. Lynn Smith, Head of the Department of Sociology at Louisiana State University, was sent to Brazil; in May, Dr. Carl C. Taylor, Head of the Division of Farm Population and Rural Welfare in the United States Department of Agriculture, left for Argentina; and in June, Professor Nathan Whetten, Dean of the Graduate School at Connecticut University left for Mexico. The State Department, which is furnishing these rural sociologists funds to conduct the investigations in the respective countries, and the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations in the USDA, which cooperates in the direction of the studies, have permitted each of these men wide latitude within which to work.

Judging from the first reports, these studies will be of great interest to the readers of Applied Anthropology. The voluntary confidential reports on Brazil by T. Lynn Smith gave ample expression of what the rural sociologist with wide interests and special training in anthropology can do at his best. The larger and comprehensive report *BRAZIL: The Brazilian Labor Force In Relation to Agriculture*, furnished factual information of great value to governmental agencies which are conducting programs for which the availability of labor for the exploitation of rubber and other resources is a consideration. The report does not limit itself to this specific problem but summarizes the available data on population composition and

shifts by area, dietary practices and health, techniques and work incentives, and attitudes of the people toward labor. The author checked the validity of data obtained from secondary sources by field trips and investigations which furnish part of the basis for conclusions and recommendations. No agency carrying on programs which require the use of large numbers of Brazilian laborers or require the cooperation of the Brazilian people can afford to ignore the data presented in this report. It will be extremely useful in any program for the rehabilitation of Brazilian agriculture.

The shorter report is less comprehensive in its scope but obviously of great significance to both Brazil and the United States at the present time. Aside from its usefulness to the State Department and the Department of Agriculture social scientists will be interested in the methods employed in dealing with Brazilian population data. For years Brazilian and other experts had been referring to the Japanese population in Brazil as approximately 200,000. The methods applied by Smith produced reliable up-to-date figures. In this sense the report which estimates the Brazilian Japanese population as 300,000 demonstrates how the social sciences may be applied to obtain data useful to administration. Although these two reports are not at present available to the general public a larger work is being prepared by Dr. Smith for general distribution. It is proposed that the progress of this and the reports now being prepared by Taylor and Whetten be reviewed in this section of the Journal.

WORK OF THE BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

Of special interest to the agencies carrying on programs in the field of health and sanitation

in the Latin American countries is the work of the Division of Vital Statistics. To such agencies current facts concerning the causes of death are invaluable. The Division is attempting to meet requests from the various countries which desire technical assistance in the development and reorganization of the reporting and analysis of vital statistics.

As stated in the preceding section, all agencies interested in the man-power and labor forces of the various countries have a vital interest in replacement rates which must be determined through the medium of an efficient reporting of births and deaths. As in this country business and commercial firms, especially the public utilities are very much concerned with population trends. Perhaps this accounts for the fact that before the war several European countries furnished free expert technical advice to assist Latin American countries in establishing systems of reporting vital statistics. Of course, the interest of these nations in improving their statuses in the Western Hemisphere was an important motivating force. It is usually to any nation's advantage to have its own institutions appreciated abroad. In the case of statistics any reporting agency increases its own usefulness when other agencies adopt forms and techniques which make the statistics comparable. Since there are few nations which can compete with the United States in its institutionalized procedures for reporting and analyzing facts which furnish the basis of Vital Statistics, the participation of American technicians in this field in Latin America is of real importance to the several governments, to action agencies, to business, and to science generally.

Before men leave to assist in the organization of reporting and analyzing services they familiarize themselves with the forms, methods, and procedures used by the United States and the various countries. Training in sociology and anthropology is particularly useful not only because of the close relation of these disciplines to population analysis but also because the administrative problems involved in getting the various agencies to cooperate in reporting systematically requires a broad understanding of the culture in the respective countries in which the tech-

nical experts are employed. Work has already been or will soon be carried on in Panama, Uruguay,¹ Haiti and El Salvador. Other countries have requested assistance. As this undertaking of the Division of Vital Statistics progresses it will be reported in this section of the Journal. Other work of the Bureau of Census will also be reported.

Federal Studies of Spanish-Americans in the Southwestern United States.

No country has available more studies of Latin American culture which were made for the purpose of guiding action agencies than the United States. Since there were slightly less than two million people of Spanish mother tongue in the United States and because during the depression this group furnished an acute relief and rehabilitation problem, it is to be expected that Spanish-Americans would be the subject of social and anthropological study. However, several unique circumstances account for the large amount of monographic material which resulted from the work of anthropologists and sociologists. The first government agency besides the Indian Service to employ a staff of anthropologists to help guide the administration of programs was the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. This staff of anthropologists published a series of monographs dealing with human dependency, community owned land grants, partido tenure systems, rehabilitation, population and other problems with which the Soil Conservation Service had to deal. The monographs were of great importance to the 1-1/2 million Spanish speaking people of Texas, Colorado, California, New Mexico and Arizona and dealt particularly with the latter two States. Also the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in the USDA conducted studies to assist in the administration of the rehabilitation work of the Farm Security Administration and other action agencies.

Besides these monographs financed by government agencies there have been studies of the Spanish speaking people of the Southwest which were financed by private agencies. A study of Taos County, New Mexico supported by the Carnegie Corporation and made for the purpose of guiding the Taos

1. Members of the Society of Applied Anthropology and others who are concerned in the development of a handbook of methods for anthropology in the applied field will be interested in the manual of Vital Statistics prepared by Dr. Forrest Linder, Assistant Chief of the Division of Vital Statistics. Since it was prepared for Uruguay while that country was reorganizing its reporting service examples drawn from the manual pertain especially to Uruguay. However, the problems of simplification, explanation and the "selling" of techniques and procedures, problems which will be of special importance in the proposed applied anthropological handbook are admirably solved. See, Forrest E. Linder, *Manual De Estadistica Vital*, Ministerio de Salud publica, Montevideo, Imp. Administracion de Loteria, 1942.

County Project in its attempt to raise the level of living of the people by adult education, has interest for the applied anthropologist. In addition there was the Survey of Chacon, New Mexico made for the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church and the Mexican labor studies published in

the University of California Publications in Economics. An attempt will be made in the future issues to evaluate and discuss the many monographs, dealing with the Spanish speaking people in the Southwest, which are of interest to applied anthropologists.

REVIEWS OF THE LITERATURE:

UNIFORMITIES IN HUMAN RELATIONS TENTATIVELY ESTABLISHED

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THE BEHAVIOR OF INDUSTRIAL WORKERS

1. *The Industrial Worker, a Statistical Study of Human Relations in a Group of Manual Workers* by T. N. Whitehead (Vol. 1, pp. xiv and 262; Vol. 2, pp. viii and 10 and 81 figures with explanations. Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press. 1938)

2. *Management and the Worker, An Account of a Research Program Conducted by the Western Electric Company, Hawthorne Works, Chicago*, by F. J. Roethlisberger and W. J. Dickson. (pp. xxiv and 615, Harvard University Press. 1939)

3. *Fatigue of Workers, Its Relation to Industrial Production* by Committee on Work in Industry of the National Research Council (pp. 165, New York, Reinhold Publishing Co. 1941). Contains a brief introductory statement by the Committee and a report of the Committee's work by George C. Homans.

4. *The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization* by Elton Mayo. (pp. 194), New York, Macmillan Co. 1933)

It has been becoming increasingly evident to some of those who have to handle problems of human relations that most social sciences have provided no practical technique for analyzing human relationships. The departmentalization of the social sciences, the result of historical development rather than any actual division of labor based on definitions of human behavior, has only led to confusion. Many of the problems upon which much energy and time is

spent seem to be problems arising from the division of behaviors into various fields rather than from behavior itself. Furthermore this unreal departmentalization has led to "passing the buck" among specialists. When hard pressed on a particular point they can always say that at that point the problem ceases to be theirs and becomes the problem of another group of specialists. Thus problems are tossed back and forth, are never faced, and naturally never solved. Unfortunately, the completely unwarranted division of human relations into the fields of economics, sociology, psychology, and so on seems strongly entrenched.

"Scholarship had its own capitalistic system and thousands of earnest and industrious men were dependent on the inability of men to think about organized society in practical and political terms which cut across scholarly boundaries. They did not want their separate properties taken away without due process. They had spent endless effort building books and articles on those properties. The separation of powers between lawyers, economists and psychologists was a most important concept in the federation of independent intellectual sovereignties known as a university".¹

Aside from the resistance due to vested interests, the scholars seem to be unaware of their own ineffectiveness. This is largely because they are "armchair scholars". They make no attempt to examine any sort of phenomenon for themselves. Instead, they rely on the observations and "statistics" of others, which reach them often third- or fourth-hand. They have no way of checking on the biases of the observers, no way of deciding whether

¹. Arnold, Thurman W. *The Folklore of Capitalism* p. 129. New Haven, Yale Univ. Press. 1937.